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UNCLAS MUSCAT 000212

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARPI (TROBERTS), NEA/PPD (CWHITTLESEY), NEA/P  
(FFINVER), INR/R/MR  
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH  
PARIS FOR ZEYA  
USCENTCOM FOR PLUSH  
FOREIGN PRESS CENTER/ASILAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [OIIP](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: CHANCE FOR PEACE AND A GENERAL'S CALLOUS COMMENTS

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A CHANCE FOR PEACE  
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11. The government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" published an editorial on February 7 under the title, "Abu Mazen's Historic Opportunity":

"There is a 'historic opportunity' to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas created this opportunity when he succeeded President Arafat. Mahmoud Abbas managed to calm the political situation in the Palestinian territories and reduce the number of attacks on Israeli civilians, taking away Israel's pretext for not reinitiating the peace process. He understands that he must control the Palestinian factions before he can hope to obtain international support for reconstruction and the establishment of an Independent Palestinian state."

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PALESTINIANS WANT PEACE  
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12. On February 7, privately-owned Arabic daily "Al-Watan" carried an editorial entitled, "Why Pray for Success":

"Palestinians have proved that they are serious about peace by freely and directly electing a practical leader who is willing to take steps toward peace. By electing Mahmoud Abbas, they demonstrated their willingness to share his vision of how to obtain an independent state. It is now clear that most Palestinians see negotiation as the best way to stop the blood shed and achieve their goals. The armed factions also showed their willingness to accept a truce if Israel stops its policy of targeted killings."

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IS KILLING FUN?  
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13. "Al-Watan" published an editorial on the same date entitled, "Having Fun Killing":

"When American General James Mattis stated in a conference in California, 'It is fun to shoot people,' he expressed his genuine feelings towards Afghanistan and Iraq. Afghans and Iraqis and perhaps the Vietnamese acknowledge the truth of his statement. People from countries far away from the U.S. know that an American soldier who agrees to travel half way around the world to kill them must be enjoying it. They do not need any clarification of what General Mattis meant by his remarks; they see the effect of his words in the daily violence and the fear in the hearts of women and children."

BALTIMORE